

Comments: I am a farmer who loads producer cars. We load on a CN line. The service we receive could at best be described as random. CN will schedule a train to come on a certain week. As the week approaches (the Friday before), we hear from CN whether or not the train is indeed coming on this week. Often it is not. If it is, CN will tell us a scheduled day. This scheduled day seems to mean nothing though. I personally cannot remember one time when the train came on the day that CN first said it would. Usually there is at least one delay. As an example, we were to receive a train during the last week of November. This was pushed back one week. We were then told the train was indeed coming on a specific day. We had 3 cars to load on this train, so we loaded our truck the night before. The train was then delayed many times, until finally arriving on Jan 2, for a Jan 3 load- which is a Sunday. Our next train arrived the following Sunday morning, and we had 8 hours to fill it. This would have been doable, if we had known for sure and trusted that the train was going to arrive on Sunday. We could make plans to get the cars loaded, but we did not feel like waiting for 4 weeks with our truck full of grain. These delays and false starts cost us valuable time, and create a lot of uncertainty as to when exactly we will have to load cars. I can not make plans because what if the train comes? Then I will have to drop everything a load cars, lest CN charge me for not releasing the cars on time. So basically, my issue is with the lack of communication and lack of commitment on CN's part. To me, the solution to this poor service, is to make CN responsible for their behavior. At the moment, if we do not release our cars within the specified amount of time, we are charge demurrage. A reciprocal situation would give CN the incentive to follow through on their commitments to supply cars. If CN had to give 72 hours notification of car arrival, and if the cars did not arrive, we would receive credit towards our freight bill. This would give us adequate time to make plans, and would give CN an incentive to follow through on promises of cars. At the moment, all the onus is on the shipper to follow through on their commitment to load the car. If we don't come through, we pay. CN has no such onus. If they don't come through, it is not like we can order cars from CP next time. Thus, a key principle to implement is reciprocity. If shippers are subject to penalty for poor performance, so should the railroads.

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